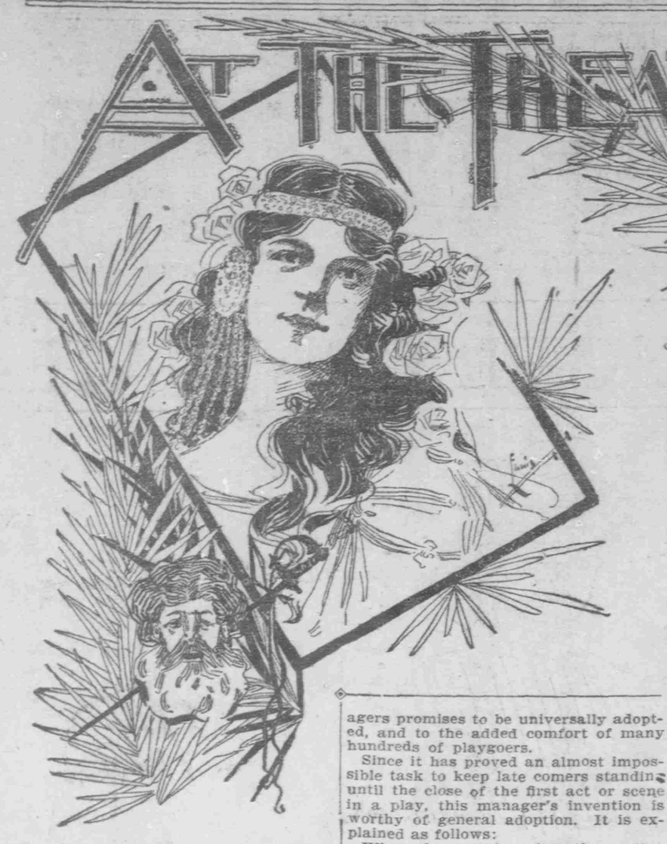
AT THE THEATRES



THIS WEEK AT THE THEATRES

SALT LAKE THEATRE.—Monday and Tuesday, Henry Lawrence Southwick in Shakespearean readings.

GRAND THEATRE. — All week, the Warde company in "Hazel Kirke."

THE theatrical season is coming to an end everywhere else in the country, but the end for Salt Lake is not yet in sight. True, for the greater part of this week sweet young girl graduates and self-conscious young men will occupy the Salt Lake theatre stage, but several other attractions—and some notable ones, too—are still to come. Even in August the Theatre will be open for the benefit of Henry Miller, who hasn't been here for a long time.

At the Grand the Warde company will probably hold on at least until the middle of June, and some other productions are scheduled for a later date. One season will, therefore, practically run into the other at both houses, although there will be an interregnum of several weeks in July.

Taken as a whole, the season of 1902-3 has been a successful one. Good houses, as a rule, have greeted the various companies, some of which deserved good houses and some of which did not. And some that deserved good houses drew poor ones, too, but that is the way of the theatrical world. However, it may be said that no matter how expensive a production may be, if it "delivers the goods" it can make money in Salt Lake.

This was demonstrated only last week by the Sothern engagement. Four performances were given and, while no statement has been given out from the box office, the gross receipts must have been somewhere around $6,000. This extraordinary business may be accounted for partly by the fact that the city was unusually crowded with strangers, but even when visitors are few first-class attractions generally do a first-class business here.

PRESS AGENTS' PROMISE.

"Hazel Kirke," Steele Mackaye's beautiful play of Scottish life, will be the bill for the fifth week of the Warde company at the Grand theatre, commencing Monday night. This charming drama has not been seen here for so long that it is almost a complete novelty and will probably draw a very large week's business. The original Effie Ellsler version will be used, and will afford ample opportunity for clever character delineation by the company, as well as some effective stage pictures.

The story of "Hazel Kirke" is sweet, clean and wholesome and full of dramatic possibilities. It appeals to all classes and touches a sympathetic chord of the heart. The central figure is Hazel, daughter of the old miller, Dunstan Kirke, and when the story opens she has fallen in love with an English lord who, while traveling incog on a hunting expedition, has fallen into the mill pond and been rescued by the miller and nursed back to health by the daughter. Hazel, however, has been educated by a rich squire with the ultimate intention of being betrothed to him. When her father learns that she has fallen in love with the young Englishman he curses her and drives her from home. She has a Scotch marriage with the young lord, and various complications follow which serve to make a strong plot and absorbingly interesting play.

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Dean Henry Lawrence Southwick, the well known Shakespearean reader, will appear at the Salt Lake theatre on Monday and Tuesday evenings of this week in Shakespearean recitals. Mr. Southwick will doubtless be greeted by large audiences.

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One of the interesting theatrical events scheduled for the summer season will be the production of "Little Christopher" at the Salt Palace theatre on June 22. Manager F. H. Stevens has the company in hand and has decided to give the Y. M. C. A. building fund a goodly share of the first week's receipts. Many local favorites have been secured by him for the initial performance in Salt Lake City of this musical work. Among them are Sallie Fisher, Lottie Levy, Fred Graham, Kenneth C. Kerr, Professor A. C. Lund and a chorus of forty voices.

"Little Christopher" is one of the late New York successes, it being the vehicle in which Willie Collier, Alec Clark and Teresa Vaughn toured the country under the management of E. E. Rice.

The title role of "Little Christopher" will be in the hands of Sallie Fisher. The plot is a novel one, it being an up-to-date story of the discovery of America and is in three acts, the last act being laid at the St. Louis exposition of 1904. This will give a vast scope for the introduction of the latest successes and most modern costuming.

Until this production is made the Salt Palace theatre will not open its doors to the public.

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From an exchange we gather the following:

Philadelphia is not always slow. The innovation of one of its theatrical managers promises to be universally adopted, and to the added comfort of many hundreds of playgoers.

Since it has proved an almost impossible task to keep late comers standing until the close of the first act or scene in a play, this manager's invention is worthy of general adoption. It is explained as follows:

When the curtain arises the seating portion of the theatre is thrown in darkness and generally when the late arrivals hand the ushers their seat checks it is almost impossible for the employes to see the row and number on the bits of cardboard. So in the theatre in question each usher is supplied with a small electric light, which he flashes on the checks and learns the whereabouts of the patron's seat.

Since the introduction of the idea all late comers have been shown to their places promptly and many errors and delays in seating have been avoided.

Why should so much attention be given to the comfort of late comers at the theatre? Are not the people who take the trouble to get there early entitled to some consideration? In the Salt Lake theatre the management compels everybody who comes late to stand until the end of the act, and the rule is an excellent one. As a result, there is probably as little tardiness at the Theatre as at any playhouse in the country.

STORIES ABOUT PLAYERS.

Chauncey Olcott tells this story:

In New Jersey there lives a rustic maiden of 19 who, until a year ago, had never seen a theatrical performance. Her parents had taught her that a theatre is synonymous with Hades. With the contrariness inherent in human nature when forbidden fruit becomes attainable, she accepted, on her first visit to New York, the invitation of a masculine cousin to attend a "show." He called it a "show," so as not to scare her, for he wanted her to go. He bought tickets for a play in which a ballet ended the second act.

Miss Jersey was enthusiastic over the performance until the ballet girls came tripping on the stage. Then her expression changed to one of horror. The color of her face rivaled that of the women dancing before her. She begged her cousin to take her out, saying she could not stay and see those creatures dance in bare legs. But he told her that they would not be allowed to go out; it would disturb the audience. So she covered her eyes with her programme and in great distress awaited the end.

At last the curtain went down. Men all over the house rose from their seats and hurried down the aisles. Rising and pulling her cousin with her, Miss Jersey made for the door, exclaiming:

"Come, Joe, let's go. You see, there's lots of men don't like it, either."

* * *

Grace George reports a conversation heard the other day in an elevated train. The speakers were two girls, both rather noisily dressed, and both very young. "Oh," said one, "I've just seen a beautiful play! I've seen Marie Bates in 'The Darling of the Gods.'"

"She's at the Belasco, isn't she?"

"Yes. Where Mrs. Carter used to be."

"Mrs. Carter?"

"Yes. You know; the wife of that novelist—Nick Carter, I think his name is."

Miss George hid behind her magazine.

"Did you go to a matinee?"

"Yes—Annie Russell. Isn't she a dear? She's Lillian Russell's daughter; Lillian and Sol Smith Russell."

Then the chat took an unexpected turn.

"Have you see Marie George in 'Pretty Peggy'? You ought to go to it. You remember Marie George in 'Frou Frou' and 'The Strollers' and 'Under Southern Skies'? Well, she's lots better in this. You can't imagine how well she rides a donkey."

But Miss George waited to hear no more. She fled the scene. And she now remarks with emphasis:

"Such is fame!"

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Kathryn Osterman, who is to be featured next season under the management of her husband, J. J. Rosenthal, in a new play called "Miss Pettycoats," is one of many. That is to say, she was one of a large family of girls, and they have all followed her lead and adopted the stage as a means to a livelihood. Coincidently, they all made their debut before the lights in the same role.

Under the management of Charles B. Jefferson Anna Osterman (Anna Belmont) played Lucy in "Hands Across the Sea." Afterward she was offered a place in Sol Smith Russell's company, and Mr. Jefferson asked her to suggest someone as her successor. So Anna suggested sister Bessie. Bessie was sent for, played the part for awhile, and then decided to marry and leave the stage. She thought sister Kathryn could play Lucy.

"Telegraph Kathryn immediately," Jefferson ordered. Kathryn arrived, but soon attracted the attention of Stuart Robson, who engaged her for his leading woman.

Jefferson was in despair. "I suppose there are no more sisters?" he said, ironically.

"Well, there's my sister Lillian."

"Hurrah!" cried Jefferson; "send for Lilly."

When she announced her intention of leaving, Mr. Jefferson viewed the situation composedly.

"I'm sorry," he said, "but will you please telegraph your sister?"

"There are no more," said Lillian, mournfully.

And then Jefferson wept. "Was ever fate more unkind?" he wailed.

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Laura Bigger, through an agreement made by her attorneys at Pittsburg on May 14, has resigned her claims to the estate of the late Henry M. Bennett for $620,000. By this agreement Peter J. McNulty and S. M. Glick will pay Miss Biggar $480,000 for her interest in the Bijou theatre, in which Miss Biggar under the will had a life interest after five years. The settlement was made on a valuation of $800,000. Under the terms of the agreement Miss Biggar secures the entire personal property of Mr. Bennett, which has a valuation of $100,000, is accorded a life annuity of $1,800 and also possession of the house at 119 East Eighty-third street, New York, valued at $40,000. Miss Biggar has announced her intention of leaving the stage and spending her time in travel.

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"Talking of funny jags," said Wilton Lackaye of the Amelia Bingham company the other day, as Ferdinand Gottschalk directed his attention to a particularly lurid specimen.

"Talking of funny jags," repeated Lackaye.

"Don't encore yourself," interrupted Gottschalk.

"Early in my career," continued Lackaye, "I was associated with an actor who was a fine artist and a good fellow, but overfond of liquid rye. On one occasion he remained dead to the world for two days. The third night he showed up much the worse for wear, with a portion of the two days' accumulation. Every one gave him the cold shoulder, and finally he retired to his dressing room. In the company was an ingenue who was the real article—yellow hair, blue eyes and baby ways. This night in question she had received a birthday book and was busily intent on securing the autographs of the company. I advised her to keep shy of Mr. H— until the next day. She paid no heed to me, however, for I heard her tap at his door and proffer her request. The next thing I heard was a loud yell and a hurried tattoo on my door. I opened it, and Miss Ingenue was all of a tremble, as she lisped out, 'Oh, Mr. Lackaye, I think Mr. H— has hysterics.'

Thinking that the D. T.'s had caught him, I hurried to his room. He was doubled up, shrieking. When he saw me he roared again and pointed to the book. I looked over his shoulder and followed the direction of his trembling finger. It halted at the date of his birth, opposite which was written a short biblical quotation, 'God Help Me Bear My Load.'"

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Even in the poker game played on the cars between stops, Lillian Russell maintains her supremacy as a star performer in the Weberfields outfit.

From Cincinnati the story has drifted to New York of a fell blow struck at Charles Bigelow in a small $10 limit game played by Miss Russell, Bigelow and the two German comedians.

It was Weber's deal, and the little man still feels some slight twinges of conscience over the frightful result of his careless work. He dealt Bigelow three nines the first time around, which incited the recipient to spirited work in raising before the draw.

To Miss Russell he dealt on the draw three fives, and as Miss Russell had, with the usual foolish logic of a woman, held up a five and a king, she held four fat, rosy fives when the time for action arrived.

It was a merciless affair so far as Bigelow was concerned. The others gradually dropped away, although Weber held three aces and fattened the pot nicely while he stayed. Bigelow, however, was the star victim and hung on desperately until he had nearly $300 in the center of the table.

When he finally showed his three nines and was confronted by the four fives, he looked like a moving picture of the Kishineff massacre.

"I had to break down and sob like a child when I looked at Charlie," said Weber. "I never saw a man take anything so to heart in my life. Charlie was going to buy a chicken farm over in Jersey this summer, and now he can't even buy a setting of eggs. It was the saddest thing that has happened in the company since we all got down on Old England together on a tip from Pete Dailey."

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George Edward Waddell, National League pitcher, called by the vulgar, "Rube," who is gradually acquiring a large reputation as a participant in interesting events, has signed a contract to appear on the stage next season in a sketch entitled, "The Stain of Guilt," to be managed by William Garen. The play will, it is said, be produced in New York City Oct. 2. Waddell will receive $40 a week for his services on the stage. Mr. Garen has given orders for the printing of numerous lithographs of the twirler, to be used in advance work.

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David Warfield will have his little joke, regardless of temperature. He perpetrated one of his hot weather, hot air variety a Wednesday or so ago upon Charles E. Evans and Edwin Foy, and is laughing yet over the results.

Everybody else in the world except Evans and Foy knows that Warfield is above presenting Wednesday matinees—especially when there is no particular demand for them. That pair of comedians, however, made no effort to conceal their ignorance when they encountered Warfield in New York at Broadway and Forty-second street the other afternoon, for, after the usual greetings, Evans said:

"Dave, we're coming over to see your matinee this afternoon."

"Don't do it," replied Warfield. "It's so hot that I don't think I shall play."

"Hully gee!" exclaimed Foy, in his polished way, "can you do that?"

"Certainly," replied Warfield. "Come over to the theatre and watch me stop it now."

The trio walked into the lobby of the Victoria theatre. There was an exchange of winks between John Ward, the treasurer, and the comedian, and then the latter said:

"Johnnie, just leave word that I have decided it is too hot for a matinee."

Turning to the astonished Evans and Foy, he said:

"What's the use of being a star?" Now I'm off for Morris park?"

* * *

Commenting on the desirability or otherwise of the actor's life, Edwin Stevens takes the usually pessimistic view.

"It seems to my inexperience, Mr. Stevens, that you should be pretty well satisfied with the profession," said the interviewer.

"You think so?" he queried, and faded into dejection. Then, dismally, "I have everything I want, I suppose"——

"Well, what more"——

"Oh, there comes a day when they say you are too old," he anticipated; "some younger man will come and kick you out, and where are you then?"

"There is no need of crossing a bridge until you come to it, and you people of the large salary should be prepared for the rainy day."

"What does the large salary mean?" he asked in return. "You have, say, $200 a week. Your season is mostly only thirty-five weeks in length, eight of the weeks in your own home in New York. That is $7,000 a year. Now, out of it you buy all of your wardrobe, there are your hotel bills and entertaining. About the hotels: One's health in the profession is one's dominant care. When that goes, everything goes. It is your chief asset. Therefore, you cannot economize on your hotel at the expense of your stomach—if you can't eat you can't work, and who can eat in the cheap hotels?

"Then there's the entertaining. We stage folk are thrown with people who have every luxury of life, and any one of gentle instincts, any pride, and the habit of reciprocity will not permit all the entertaining to be on one side. Then we inevitably form somewhat luxurious habits. If my millionaire friend leaves his automobile with me for six or seven months while he goes to Europe, it's likely I shall form the auto habit.

"There is a way of managing by putting a little by every week—I've done it by insurance. You'll let the meat bill go by, but the insurance is like a jack pot—you've got to put in again to make good."

"So you don't advise the stage as a means of livelihood?"

With depressing solemnity Mr. Stevens rose to remark: "No. When anyone asks us—my wife and I—whether to take to the boards or not, we say, 'Don't,' emphatically don't."

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This is from Harper's Weekly: The mind of the modern actor—we speak, of course, of the many, not of all—lies in his dancing legs, his side splitting grimaces, his "business," his exaggerations of peculiar lives of today. The mind thus devoted to the lighter tasks of jocularity, skipping also from one author's jokes to those of another, on a moment's notice, as its possessor skips from town to town and from stage to stage, is not a mind that can suddenly turn to the contemplation and the study of Shakespeare with any hope that the lines of the poet will get the better of the encounter. The actor who is to play Shakespeare acceptably must not frivol away his intellectual dignity. One cannot sing "Mary Had a Little Lamb" with all the enthusiasm of his soul, for 300 nights, and hope to be equal to the "Magnificat" or a Te Deum, or Siegfried's Rhne journey, on the three hundred and first night. The tasks to which the modern English and American manager puts the English and American actor have destroyed the old school of Shakespeare actors. Now, we are not saying that this is not for the best; that in the processes of the evolution of the arts the theatre has not naturally become what it is.

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Olga Nethersole appears to have been unfortunate again in the selection of a new play. Dispatches from London say "The Gordian Knot," which she produced with Beerbohm Tree, was far from a success. But success was hardly deserved, if the following account is to be trusted:

Rarely has a more vulgar or more repulsive play been put on the stage than "The Gordian Knot," by Claude Lowther, which was produced for the first time at His Majesty's theatre tonight. It was apparently the author's ambition to depict depraved womanhood without a single redeeming feature, and he certainly achieved disgusting success. The play is not worth describing. It will suffice to say that the piece affords Beerbohm Tree an opportunity for some of the best work he has ever done. Olga Nethersole, as the villainess, played her part altogether too well. The play contains two or three superfluous travesties, including a caricature of American women, which are gratuitously offensive. It was staged in Mr. Tree's usual sumptuous manner, but it is difficult to understand the possibility of its obtaining any measure of popularity.

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Bronson Howard is to contest with Stuart Robson's heirs for the rights of "The Henrietta," his famous comedy, which was controlled during his lifetime by the late comedian. Mr. Howard maintains that under his contract the play reverted to him as soon as Mr. Robson was unable to use it. Robson is reported to have feared that the play would fall into other hands and is said to have destroyed the manuscript in order to prevent it ever being used after his death. It is likely that the matter will be taken into the courts for final adjustment.

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George Primrose gave what he declares to have been his last minstrel performance at New Rochelle, N. Y., a few evenings ago. "Yes," said Primrose, after the performance, "this ends my connection with minstrelsy. I've been in it since '68, and I've been a manager for twenty-five years. I've had enough of the one-night stands, and I'm through with it. Luckily, I'm one of the fortunate fellows, and I've laid by enough so that I can go slow now. Don't let the public think I'm an old man or that I've quit the theatrical business. Nothing of the sort. I've quit minstrelsy, but I'm going to stay on the stage. What am I going to do? Oh, I'm not ready to tell my plans just yet. But I'm going to keep before the public."

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During a recent visit of the royal family to a West End, London, theatre, the managers, who were very anxious to honor the king and queen, gave orders that the whole front of the house staff should line up in order that their majesties might walk out between rows of bowing officials.

This was done. The theatre in question possesses a stage hand of handsome and distinguished appearance. He was one of those included in the order. He put on evening dress for the occasion and duly took his place on the line where the royal procession was to pass.

As their majesties emerged from the royal box Queen Alexandra cast her eyes down the line. She passed over the manager and assistant manager, but her eyes finally fell on the distinguished stage carpenter, whom she selected for a special mark of the royal favor. Pausing for an instant, she graciously extended her hand and shook that of the carpenter and then passed out of the theatre.

There is now an employe of that theatre who is filled with what he considers justifiable pride and a manager whose sense of humor seems to be temporarily clouded.

Miss Paine—"If fourteen pupils can sell 1,000 copies, how many ought 140 to sell?"

Leland—"Let x equal the number."

F. H. STEVENS, MANAGER OF THE LITTLE CHRISTOPHER CO.